

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 3703

EXDIS

FROM DCM NELSON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: RH, US, UK, PDEV
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH RHODESIAN REPRESENTATIVE HAWKINS

REFS: (A) PRETORIA 3610, (B) PRETORIA 3613

DEPT PLEASE PASS AS APPROPRIATE

1. SUMMARY: IN JULY 26 DISCUSSION WITH DCM, RHODESIAN REP HAWKINS DESCRIBED THE MOTIVATION FOR SMITH'S DECISION TO CALL A GENERAL ELECTION. EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE THAT THE ELECTION WOULD STRENGTHEN SMITH'S HAND, HE SAID THE AIM IS TO ENABLE SMITH TO CONTINUE PURSUIT OF THE UK/US SETTLEMENT EFFORT AND NOT TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. IT APPEARED THAT HAWKINS' PRINCIPAL PURPOSE WAS TO URGE ANOTHER ROUND OF SALISBURY TALKS WITH THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP, THE IMPLICATION BEING THAT SMITH MIGHT WELL PROVE MORE FORTH-COMING THAN PREVIOUSLY. PRESUMABLY HE HAD IN MIND THE ELECTORAL BOOST SUCH A MEETING COULD GIVE SMITH. HAWKINS GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF HAVING MADE THIS APPROACH ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE IN THE CONVICTION THAT SMITH IS THE ONLY MAN WHO CAN BRING THE WHITE COMMUNITY ALONG TO THE KIND OF SETTLEMENT ENVISIONED BY THE UK AND US. END SUMMARY.
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2. LAST EVENING, JULY 26, DCM MET WITH RHODESIAN REPRESENTATIVE HAROLD HAWKINS AT THE LATTER'S REQUEST. HAWKINS FIRST REVIEWED THE BACKGROUND TO SMITH'S DECISION TO CALL A GENERAL ELECTION AND FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA'S TRIP TO SALISBURY IN CONNECTION WITH THAT DECISION. HAWKINS HAD ACCOMPANIED BOTHA TO SALISBURY AND HIS ACCOUNT WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE VERSION

BOTHA HAD GIVEN THE AMBASSADOR (REF A).

3. HAWKINS SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN FOREWARNED BY RHODESIAN MINISTER OF INFORMATION BROOMBERG ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A DECISION BY SMITH TO CALL ELECTIONS. HE INFORMED BOTHA, WHO REACTED VERY NEGATIVELY BECAUSE THE MOVE WOULD BE SEEN AS A REJECTION OF THE UK-US SETTLEMENT INITIATIVE, WHICH SOUTH AFRICA WANTED TO PURSUE FURTHER. HAWKINS REPORTED BOTHA'S VIEWS TO SMITH, BUT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ELECTIONS WAS ABOUT TO BE MADE AND SMITH WENT AHEAD.

4. DESCRIBING SMITH'S DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM THE DEFECTION OF TWELVE MP'S AND DES FROST FROM THE RHODESIAN FRONT, HAWKINS SAID THE POLITICAL SITUATION WAS DETERIORATING. SMITH HAD TO ACT PROMPTLY IF HE WERE GOING TO PRESERVE AUTHORITY TO CONTINUE SETTLEMENT TALKS. FOR BOTHA'S BENEFIT, SMITH HAD LIKENED HIS PREDICAMENT TO THAT WHICH WOULD FACE THE SAG IF THERE WERE A CONTINGENT OF 45 HNP REPRESENTATIVES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT.

5. IN HAWKINS' VIEW, THERE IS NO DOUBT SMITH'S POSITION WILL BE REESTABLISHED BY THE ELECTIONS. MOST OF THE TWELVE MP'S WHO HAD DEFECTED WILL BE DEFEATED, HE SAID. HE DESCRIBED SMITH AS THE ONLY MAN WHO COULD UNIFY THE WHITE COMMUNITY BEHIND THE KIND OF SETTLEMENT ENVISIONED BY THE UK AND US. HE RECOGNIZED AT THE SAME TIME THAT SMITH'S CREDIBILITY
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OUTSIDE RHODESIA COULD HARDLY BE WEAKER. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, NO ALTERNATIVE IF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IS TO BE ACHIEVED.

6. ACCORDING TO HAWKINS, SMITH INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO PURSUE THE UK-US INITIATIVE AND HE REMAINS COMMITTED TO MAJORITY RULE. HAWKINS APPEARED TO BE UNCERTAIN, HOWEVER, WHETHER SMITH WOULD CONTINUE TO SEEK SOME FORM OF QUALIFIED FRANCHISE. HE SAID SMITH HAS NO INTENTION OF INITIATING AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT; NOR DOES HE CONTEMPLATE A REFERENDUM ALLOWING BLACK RHODESIANS TO DECIDE WHO SHOULD REPRESENT THEM IN EFFORTS TO REACH A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

7. TURNING TO WHAT APPEARED TO BE HIS MAIN PURPOSE, HAWKINS MADE A SPECIAL POINT OF URGING THE IMPORTANCE OF ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKS IN SALISBURY WITH THE GRAHAM-LOW CONSULTATIVE GROUP. THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP WOULD FIND SMITH MORE FLEXIBLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE THAN ON THE PREVIOUS OCCASION. HAWKINS ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE IMMENSELY HELPFUL IN SECURING SMITH'S COOPERATION IF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP COULD GIVE HIM SOME CREDIT OR, FAILING THAT, AT LEAST LET HIM KNOW THAT THE UK AND US RECOGNIZE HE FACES GREAT DIFFICULTIES IN ATTEMPTING TO LEAD THE COUNTRY TO A PEACE-

FUL SETTLEMENT. "A LITTLE KINDNESS AND CONSIDERATION", HE SAID, WOULD GO A LONG WAY WITH SMITH IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

8. HAWKINS SAID HE HAD SOUGHT THIS DISCUSSION WITH THE DCM ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE; THE VIEWS HE HAD EXPRESSED WERE HIS OWN. HAWKINS COULD WELL HAVE BEEN ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM SMITH, WHO FOR ELECTORAL PURPOSES HAS SOUGHT A DEMONSTRATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN SUPPORT AND FOR THE SAME REASON WOULD WANT SOME SHOW OF RECOGNITION OF HIS IMPORTANCE BY THE UK AND US. THE IMPRESSION GIVEN, HOWEVER, WAS THAT HAWKINS, AS HE HAS DONE IN THE PAST, WAS ACTING ON HIS OWN IN THE CONVICTION THAT SMITH, WHATEVER HIS FAILINGS, IS NEEDED AT THIS CRITICAL STAGE OF THE SETTLEMENT EFFORT. THE IDEA OF ANOTHER MEETING WITH GRAHAM AND LOW HAD BEEN RAISED AS CONFIDENTIAL

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WELL WITH THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR WHO ALSO BELIEVES THAT HAWKINS WAS ACTING ON HIS OWN IN THAT INSTANCE.
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